MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

BY J. C.

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PREFACE.

This little Volume consists of a compilation of several scraps of Poetry—which have been written from time to time—some very recently—others long ago.

The Author has led so erratic a life, for many years past, that he has lost,—or mislaid,—many of his Manuscripts, which would have increased this "little Volume" to a much greater bulk—None of them were ever intended for publication. And he now prints what remain to him, in a condensed form, solely for the purpose of guarding against the future loss of his poetical lucubrations,—which—after all—may be "of *no value but to the owner.*"!

The Poem on "Self" speaks for its-"self." If it should *offend* any one, it *must* proceed from "the *ardor of conviction*" that what is there advanced is—in the main—*too true!*

The "Force of Circumstances" requires some little explanation. It was written under the *full belief* that what it contains is *essentially true*—namely, that the after-life of *every individual* is—more or less—*forcibly* influenced by the "circumstances" in which his early—or even, later—life happens to be placed—*no one can contravene this.*

The Author is far from having any wish—or intention—of impugning the Providence of God—of which "without controversy, great is the mystery."!

The "Thoughts, by a Quasi-Predestinarian Layman," also requires—perhaps *more*

—explanation. It was the manifest discrepancy between *some* texts of Scripture with *others* that first led the Author's mind to the subject.

Some passages of it may appear to be harshly put—but all that the Author *intends* to convey, is the conviction, in his own mind, that *the "Texts,"* to which it has reference,—*cannot be accurately translated from the original!*

The "Autobiography" of the Author was written—on a request—to which he, thoughtlessly, acceded. He had scarcely written twenty lines, before he discovered what a *difficult task* he had undertaken! Let those that *doubt* the weight of this excuse,—*themselves* attempt to write *their "autobiography" in verse!* They will THEN find out the *restraints* and *"difficulties"* to which they are exposed!

Many passages in the Author's life have,

of necessity, been passed over—more out of deference to the feelings of others than his own.

It can, therefore, hardly be attributed to him, that he has, in any essential degree, gone counter to his motto—"Nothing extenuate;" and, most certainly, has *not* set down "aught in malice."

The trifles that follow speak for themselves—they were written, at various times, as an amusement in the occasional leisure hour of the writer.

The Charades may puzzle *some*—to *others*, they may be of easy solution.

The whole will—no doubt—be considered as a curious poetical *medley!*

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

THE AUTHOR.

"Nothing extenuate."

Oft as the seasons roll their rapid course,
And bring to *me*, their sorrows, and remorse,
I sit me down, to contemplate the plan,
Fixed,—from Eternity,—to govern man!
And then recoil—bewildered with the theme,—
"Is *this* not fancy—or—a Phantom *dream*"?!
But when—alas!—I strive to think it so,
The stern *realities* but answer—"*No*"!
"This is the chequered life, you 're doomed to spend,"—
"In joys, or sorrows, till its term shall end,"—
"And *then*, shall come, that final—endless—Fate"
"To fix—for ever—your eternal state"!

Well! be it so! there's naught I've power to do,
I've had my pleasures, and—my sorrows too,!
And now—in this drear time of ending life,—
I suffer, sorely, from unworthy strife!
But what is that to others?—yet to *me*,
It adds a load of bitter misery!
Still—let me not on such sad topics dwell,
I'll 'tempt—howe'er unprofitable—to tell
The simple story of a life, nigh spent,
That leaves its remnant *anything* but *content!*

My life began—with every prospect fair,
I know not *one* with whom it could compare—
I speak not, now, of those scholastic years,
(Prescriptive period of smiles and tears)
The "smiles" arose from prospect of "vacation,"—
The 'tears' and sorrows, for its *short duration!*—
And *yet*—I had my pleasures, e'en at school,
(I never was considered *quite* a *fool!*—)

I well remember, that—on one occasion,—
There was a fête—rejoicing—an ovation—

To celebrate a certain fame—
Which gallant Englishmen can, ever claim,
At sea?—on shore? but *that* I quite forget,—
Its *main* remembrance is still vivid yet;—
I *think* it was the victory off Trafalgar,
No matter!—'twas an incident of the war;
A poem—prize was offered for the best,
Which (on that topic,) should transcend the rest;
I wrote my lines—on fancied conquest bent—
(Was ever Poetaster more content?!)
A certain Dullard, then prefers a claim,
That *I* should write something in the 'Dullard's' name;
I penned the lines, and gave them to my friend,
His "heart-felt gratitude" would "never end"!
The time complete, to claim the valued prize,
(Which all aspirants viewed with eager eyes,)
We both advance!—when—what was my disgust,
To see *my hopes all crumbled in the dust!*
The wished-for boon was handed to my neighbour,
Vicarious profit of *his brother's* labor!

These follies past—I then was sent to College,
To "make acquaintances," and—*gather knowledge!*
The "knowledge" gathered, was of small extent,
I left the College—*poorer than I went!*
Whose fault was *this?* tne 'fault' was all *my own,!*
I ne'er was born to mount the classic Throne!
I picked the crumbs that fell beneath the chair,
And was content with what I "gathered" there.—
But let not *Isis* claim the sole behoof,
Of sending *such a scholar* from her roof!
The *Cam* might almost 'claim' an equal share,
I had a "*Liceat Migrare*" there!
I spent my time,—as Undergraduates do,—
In hunting—shooting—*after chapel—Loo!*
I lost *three hundred pounds*, one luckless night!—
Its *payment* gave me an uneasy fright!
I wrote my creditors an "*I. O. U.*"—
(Portentous vowels in the distant view!)
But *how to pay it*—from an *empty pocket?!*
Nothing was left me but—to—"*strike the docket*!"
In miserable plight—I bent my joyless way,
In wonder what my Creditors had to say!

They jeered — and ridiculed — my rueful mien,—
Declaring that 'twas 'nothing but a fit of spleen'!
And then, said something (I cannot find a rhyme)
Of—"Fortune's favors at another time"—!
I *sate me down*, and won FIVE *hundred back!*
More than equivalent to my former lack!
And *then*, they said, that—"as a young beginner,"
"I'd been a *pretty tolerable winner*"!
Casting a slur on, what they called my "*honor*"!
For *cursing* Fortune—and *then—ride home upon her!*
At once I rose!—and placed upon the table,
Two hundred pounds—to share as they were able,—
"There! take the surplus, that I've lately won,"
"I'm only ending—just where I begun"—!
They sneered—and gibed, me—for my *dastard feeling*,
"NO MORE TEMPTING OF DAME FORTUNE'S DEALING"!
From *that day forward*—until *this day now*,
I've never looked on Fortune's chequered brow!
Have never played for more than *half-a-crown*,—
Careless of witnessing either smile or frown!

Listen to THIS—ye gamblers in the bud!
Mark the *temptation* that *has been withstood!*
I claim *some credit* for determination,
In thus *resisting* so *great* "*temptation*"!
Oh! let me warn—if warning can but save,—
One soul from courting an untimely grave!
Let me but tell him—what he little knows,—
When *once* a *Gambler*—*then*—FAREWELL REPOSE!
Farewell! the joys, and blessings of the world,
From every comfort is the Gambler hurled!
There is a feeling—*prurient* in *itself*—
(Apart from seeking an increase of pelf!)
A 'feeling' none but Gamblers can pourtray,
That *tempts*—and *drags* them—on their downward way!
The Siren's voice—her meretricious air—
Tempted her victims to their own despair!
Whether on Italy's—or Sicilia's shore,—
Her 'voice,'—*once heard*—they sank, to rise no more!
And what is *this*—but just the Gambler's fate?
He finds his error, but alas!—*Too Late!!*

And sinks, at length, – from loss of others' gains,—
Becomes delirious, and—*blows out his brains ! !*

Avoid a *Gambler*—as you would a "*hell*" !
Oh ! "touch" nor—"taste,"—for—thus the Scriptures tell—
"*Whoe'er* with *pitch* to dally was beguiled,"
"And left the filthy compound—"undefiled" ! ?

This little episode on vice of gambling—
May seem to *some*, a vain—discursive—rambling !
That 'seeming' taunt, the Poet well can bear,
If he but save *one Gambler* from the snare !

Emerged, at length, from "Alma Mater's" care,
I trod the world, with feelings light as air—
But,—as the younger of a noble scion
I had not much property to rely on,

Must, therefore, seek an erudite profession,
To give me something of the world's possession.
The *Church* was mooted, but did not suit my bent,
My voice against the *ministry*—"Non-content!"
The *Law* was next proposed—id est—*the Bar*—
But,—after all,—my "*destiny*" was—*War!*
Become a Soldier! and without a care,
I donned the scarlet with a martial air!
And bade the world defiance!—

. . . . . .

Alas!—how soon, did fancy's truthless mien,
Disclose another—and a sterner—scene!
The God of war—triumphant o'er the land—
Commanded those, enrolled within His band,
To seek the hottest of the mortal fray,
(Woe be to those, who dared to *slink away!*)
I bowed obedience to my country's call,
And went, where many a hero met his fall,—
Returned intact—without a broken bone,—
I wandered o'er the country, quite alone—
On "leave of absence"—and on pleasure bent—
I passed my time in comfort and—content—

But all enjoyments reach their final end,
As erring mortals to corruption tend—
My "leave" expired—I joined my gallant corps,
And soon young "Richard was himself" once more!
But not "*on velvet*" as a tyro thinks,
There's something ever "in my nostril stinks"!
And what is *that?* some readers might demand,
More than you fancy!—Is the sole command
Of many a high-born noble of the land,
Under some vulgar—low-bred—'*martinet*,'
Of none account?!—who is it can forget
The galling treatment that can never fail,
To make subordinates of none avail!?
The *Wretched creature* that commanded *me*,
Seemed to delight in causing misery,
To all those hapless victims, that were sent,
To suffer such tyrannic government!
If this should meet the eye of some, now past
Their climacteric, in life's stormy blast,
I claim their voice that in our ripened youth,
The facts narrated were the *simple truth!*

Their honest evidence, that I don't exceed
"One jot or tittle" of the very deed.—
I headed this—my narrative—with a motto—
"*Nothing extenuate*"—so, now then, "voce sotto"
Will, therefore, tell a plain—unvarnished—story,
However it may derogate from my glory!
My Commandant—a wily—clannish—*Scot*—
(Resolved (for *English*) to make his corps *too hot*)
Carried his system to the very worst,
Until our stifled indignation burst!
Let others tell their individual grief,
For *me*—what follows, I *demand belief!*—
Ordered to the presence of the "wily Scot"
(His name, *Mac—something—but no matter what*—!)
I 'd been out shooting, and had missed "*parade*"
His countenance assumed a darkened shade,
Made use of language that *I could not stand*,
So told him plainly—"I ceased from his command"!
He rang the bell—his Satrap soon appeared,
The monarch smiled—his countenance upreared!
"Well, Sir! repeat the words you just have said,"
"I cannot Sir! 't has quite escaped my head!"

The great man's face assumed a livid hue,
"What Sir! and am I *thus* to be cajoled by you"?
I looked as meek as any sucking child,
But *was* not thus so easily beguiled!
He tried by threats—and then he tried a coax,
But found himself—at length—the victim of a *hoax!*
The Satrap gone—we now were left alone,
The gallant Colonel took another *tone,!*
Extolled "the Service" with a solemn face—
And then, said *something* HARD about "*disgrace*"!
My blood was up!—I could not help the action,—
I rushed across—and whispered—"*Satisfaction*"!
The bell again!—with greater force than ever!—
He that could catch me, had, indeed, been clever!
I seized my horse—and once upon his back,
I bade defiance to his venal pack!
I rode as hard, as heel and hoof could go,
And fairly distanced my pursuing foe!
I sped my way—scarce knowing where I went—
And stopt at the portal of Supreme Government!
Sent in my card—was admitted in a trice,
Told my plain story, and received—*advice!*

(Ignorant of my particular pathology)
To go, *and make a—base apology!*
I told his Lordship that *it could not be!*
In fact, that—I determined to be free!—
He hum'd and ha'd—then told me to sit down,
And *valued my Commission* at—*half-a-crown!*
But soon the *Man*—in native accents mild—
(I should have said he knew me from a child)
Bade me be quick—and write my resignation—
This done—he quickly wrote his "approbation"
"With power to sell"—its ink was scarcely dry,
When *who should arrive*—but—mine indignant
enemy?!
Requested audience—and was ushered in,—
I scanned, and gave him, a sardonic grin!
He told his tale—as I had told before,—
But left out *something he would fain ignore!*
The gallant Colonel look'd "*carving-knives*"
at *me*,
And then proceeded with his history—
"I beg to question you—most noble Lord,"—
"Has this young officer told every word,"

"That passed between us, on a late occasion,"
"Without the slightest—any—deviation"?
"How can I tell"—the noble Lord replied—
"He told me "*something*" that I *wish to hide*"!
"And ended—with a simple—plain desire,"
"That I would allow him to retire"—
"And—(having bought)—dispose of his Commission"
"To which I tendered him my *full permission*"
"Seeing—*from what he told me*—that 'twas vain"
"To hope his Colonel's favor to regain!"
The Colonel's face then turned as black as thunder,
Pourtraying—disappointment—rage, and wonder!
Talked of court-martials—and of "close arrest"
Ending—obsequiously—"but my Lord knows best"!—
His Lordship then—to finish the debate—
"I fear me—Colonel—that you're now *too late*"!
"Had you but come just half-an-hour before"
"Your wounded pride might not have felt so sore"!
"The power granted cannot be retracted"
"However ill your Subaltern has acted"!

The disconcerted Colonel then retired—
His darkened countenance with malice fired!
I caught him at the gate,—*repeated what*
In *one short hour, he could not have forgot!*
He turned an ear, as deaf as any post,—
And showed a countenance white as any ghost!
I met my noble friend a few days after,
His placid countenance convulsed with laughter!
All this occurred in India's torrid clime,
(It *is* so difficult to find a rhyme!)
I sold my 'bit of parchment' at Calcutta,
And then was left with—*scarcely bread and butter!*
But, be it known—I never meant to *stay*,
Just *to be shot at* for my *paltry pay!*
I 've other little episodes to tell,
But, then, they would not shine in poetry so well!
Such as my marriage—while a thoughtless boy,
With little scions—bringing—*anything but joy!*
By treading closely 'pon their father's heel,
Achilles—like—'tis *there* he '*feels the steel*'!
Where is the *boy*, whoever yet was wed,
And took a partner to the marriage bed,

But wedded one who *might* have been his *mother!*
And then the *son* be taken for his *brother!?*——
Well!—to proceed—I sojourned in the East,
(Its baleful climate good for man nor beast)
When health, and funds, were both alike, at fault,
I could no longer, with discretion, halt,
So—took my passage, to get home again—
For months, I wandered o'er the trackless main,
Until, at length, bright Albion's chalky shore,
Welcomed the wand'rer to her arms once more!
But *not to riches*—or e'en—*competence!*
I counted shillings—aye!—and *counted pence!*
My wretched poverty was most intense,!
I knock'd at the portal of my father's house,—
My trembling summons, meek as any mouse,—
Sent in my name—requested to be seen,
My honor'd Parent stands *behind the screen,!*
And *whispers something* that I could not hear,
The *tone* conveyed was *pregnant with a fear,!*
The pampered menial soon again appears,
And told me what *still tingles in my ears!*
Said that "his honor" would not see my face,
In fact—to hold myself in dire disgrace!

No prayers—entreaties- could at all avail,
His heart was obdurate as an iron nail!
Far be the thought! (scant justice must be done)
To cast *all blame* upon my sire alone!
Still must the verdict *somewhat harsh* appear,
"*Starvation on*—One Hundred Pounds a-year"!
My Father rolling in abundant wealth,
Wanting for nothing but that blessing—*health!*
The lack of which—or else *some other cause,*
Hardened—and steeled him against nature's laws!
Behold me sent—to struggle on with life,—
On such a pittance—with a sickly wife!
Pent in a cottage, with a single room,
Myself compell'd to wield the sweeping-broom!
To act the carter, for a load of peat!
To keep us warm- and cook our scanty meat!
Still—like a blood-horse, in a huxter's cart—
I never swerved, and yet I *felt the smart!*
In this sad plight, I spent some years of time,
In economic Scotia's classic clime—
And when, at length, events compell'd a change,
From our poor cottage, to a wider range,

I left the neighbourhood—in honor held—
Received the "Freedom" of an ancient 'Guild'!—
I Prize that document, as a treasure yet,
The *Pride* it caused I never can forget!
A poor—but well-born – stranger, settled down,
Upon the confines of an ancient town,
With income—scarce enough to let him live,—
Receives all honors that the "Guild" could give!—
Let those that *will*, decry fair Scotia's land,
From *me*, respect alone, may she command!—
I, since, have travelled both her breadth, and
length,
The grateful feeling has but gathered strength—!

I 'll cut my story short as I can make it,
I cannot tell what made me undertake it!
A "leisure hour" to spare, from time to time,
Or else a "*cacoethes*" taste for *rhyme!*
I dare not call it *Poetry*—because
You 'll find infractions of poetic laws—!

And yet—we scribblers have a text to cheer us—
"Aliquando bonus Dormitat Homerus"!

Proceed we then, with this, my simple tale,
In which *one element*—can alone avail—
And that is *Truth!*—however it may tend,
To *raise suspicions of the Poet's end!*
And who art *thou*, that judgest of thy brother?!
Art *thou* in office, to condemn another?!
Look to *thyself*—examine well *thy* ways,—
Art *thou* an object of thy Maker's praise?!
Answer this question, to thy very heart,—!
Say but that—in them—'Self' has had no part!
Be silent then! attend to what 's thine own,
And leave thy brother to himself alone!

There is a party—rampant in the land—
Call it—an't please you—"Th' Evangelic Band"—

There—should a brother fail—however little—
To hold their *tenets*, by "one jot or tittle"—
The hapless recusant is at once consigned,
To "*Comminations*" *horrors*—all combined!
And then,—the Roman Catholic—*Maynooth and all*,—
Is it a wrong—or an unrighteous call,—
That *seven millions* should demand a meed,
To rear their Priests, in their *own honest creed?!*
In *firm belief*, that all, without her pale,
By prayer—or charity—can have naught avail?!
After all,—the Church,—called "Anglican,"—is a *sect*,
Dissenting from the Romanists!—why not protect,
Your "*Nursing mother*"—and whom all agree,
To be the parent of your ancestry!?
Yet,—but another word, before we part,—
Is not *Religion in a man's own heart?!*
The *object plain—his individual soul!!*
Who dares to place it under aught control?!
I hold *Religion* as a *sacred feeling*—
In which another can have *no just dealing!*

All *interference* but amounts to *this*—
You say "follow *mine*"—and then, are bid, to—
"follow" *his!*
Which is in right, and which is in the wrong?!—
He holds his tenets in *conviction* strong—
You may *deplore*, but can't impugn his *right*,
To hold those 'tenets' 'gainst his Ruler's might!
And then—as *subjects*—do they not deserve,
Assistance from the government they serve?!
And serve her *well*—in England's urgent hour,—
To swell her forces—and support her power;
Again!—remember! that her Church was plundered,
(The date was eighty-eight, and sixteen hundred,)
Of all the revenues, that were *her's alone*,
By the brute power of a reckless throne!——
Let Statesmen—aye!—let Englishmen beware!
Lest they should LOSE *what England ill could spare!*

Let not the Reader, by these lines, suppose
The humble Poet to be one of those,

Who hold the tenets of the Roman creed,
From which he differs, and recoils indeed!
He writes, *alone*, to serve his country's good,
THE MASS OF NUMBERS CAN NEVER BE WITHSTOOD!

Apologising for this long—and vague—digression,
(At utter variance with my late profession)
I 'll tell my tale—concisely as I can,
Adopting closely the laconic plan—

Some years elapsed—not fraught with much to tell—
I wandered o'er the world, and fared full well;—
The "*Iron Duke*" then took me by the hand,
Gave me the post, o'er which he held command,—
Was "passing rich"—possessing something clear,
Beyond the 'Parson's'—"forty pounds a-year"!

And then, at length—(the time now long since
past)
My honor'd parent sank,—and breathed his last,!
And left me some ~~two~~ Five thousand pounds of rent,
Which,—as the younger,—made me quite content.
Possessed—at last—of tolerable funds,—
I went to France—and—*kept a pack of hounds!*
Hunted the boar—the stag—and spent my time,
How much more pleasantly, than *penning rhyme!*
But every pleasure must attain its term,
As flowers tend to perish from the germ!———
The riots in the country brought me back,
Compell'd—per force—to leave my gallant pack,
And act the Magistrate in my native land,
To check the mischief of a lawless band,
That wander'd through the country—right and
left—
Committing murder—rapine,—plunder—theft!—
The 'band' dispersed—I sojourned for a while—
In the old halls of my Fathers' domicile.
Again—from causes, not to be revealed—
I roamed once more, and fairly "took the field"!

If but a nameless witness such as me.
Can aught avail to bear his testimony—
Avoid America!—no people 'pon the earth,
(Whatever this—my 'testimony' is worth)
Are so detestable!—This may strange appear—!
Just let an *Englishman* sojourn there *one year!*—
Return—and tell his own unvarnish'd story—
'Twill *ill redound to "fair Columbia's" glory!!*
I 've travell'd North—South—East, and West—
But oh! my native land! I love thee best!—
As for the "Yankees"—a *more hateful set,*
Upon this earth, I never yet have met!
If but a *Briton dares* confess his race,
Insult is cast upon *his very face!*

On one occasion—in a Northern State,—
In conversation, I ventured a debate,—!
The "Man of Congress" held his head on high,
So "*guess'd*" and "*calculated*" accordingly!
Something was said about the "Mother Land,"
And that *his* country held supreme command

Over that element that, none but *we*,
Can ever claim so great authority!—
Talked of the "*Chesapeake*," and the "*Shannon*" too—
His *classic answer*—*"*"*Pray, what's that to you*"?!
(Doubtless—in *speaking*—"Jonathan's" uncouth,
By *why* the *nose*—and not employ the *mouth*?!)
As for the sequel—I would fain conceal
The *degradation that I made him feel!*
I met him once again—still further South,—
The wretch decamp'd, and—"open'd not his mouth!"
All these events have long since pass'd away,
To *me*, they seem but just "the other day!"
I still have much to tell of all I saw,
But oh!—Those Legislators of Yankee Law!!
What would a member of *our* senate think,
Of *vulgar ruffians*, in *tobacco stink*—
Spitting—and chewing, that detested leaf?!
The scene presented was beyond belief!!

* A *literal fact!*

The facts I witnessed happen'd long ago—
So let us hope it *may not still be so!*
But e're we leave this most *un*-classic ground,
Let me record the *wonder* that is found
In that one *Great Phenomenon!*—that defies
The *world* to show the least approach—in size—
To *Grand Niagara!!* . . . . .
To give the slightest notion of the *fact,*
Of that *enormous*—that *stupendous*—cataract,
Let not the reader's ignorance suppose,
(Whether in Poetry—or in duller Prose—)
That 'Prose'—or even 'Poetry'—can avail,—
To paint a scene, where ALL DESCRIPTIONS FAIL!!
Those that would wish from all disguise to free it,
Just take advice—"*Pack up,* and *go and see it*"!

Again I cross'd the Broad Atlantic Ocean—
Retraced my steps—but not without emotion—
Events had happen'd, that well-nigh broke my heart!
The pangs inflicted ne'er can cease to smart!

I roamed again—in something like despair—
In hopes, excitement my spirits would repair!
For ease of mind, I had but slender warrant!"
"Cœlum —*non animum* . . . qui trans mare
currunt!"
So Horace sang—some thousand years ago—
Who can assert that still it is not so?!
Ireland, and Scotland, Wales, and England too,
In turn, I passed those countries in review,
Then, went to France, to seek for something new!
But all in vain!—I sought the world around,
For the *one blessing*—that's so seldom found!
At length—Ευρηκα! Yes! I've "found it out"!
But found what *Time* has been *too long about!*
The Span of Life "can little more supply"
"Than just to look about us—and, to die!"
And yet the dregs of life are oft the sweetest—
When future Hope—and pleasure are completest!
And oh!—the blessings that I now possess,
In *that*, where centres all my happiness!
Still "Hope deferred" is apt to "*sicken*" those,
Who look for its fruition in repose!

My Tale is told!—we all must wait to see,
What still remains in dark futurity!

Some hundred lines now past—in this "my Life,"
I spoke of "suff'ring from unworthy strife,"
I *did so then*—*'Tis gone!*—so who can say,
Or calculate the issues of a single day?!
All this may seem a *mystery* those,
Whose optics cannot reach beyond their nose!
And still, the scenes depicted are as true,
As that *many passages are withheld from* YOU!

I think I hear *Curiosity* exclaim—
"Who may *this* be? and what can be his *name?*"!
His "name" dear Madam!—you'll not get from *me*,
Oh! yes! I'll tell you!—his name is "*Mystery!*"
He writes in secret—fires behind a hedge—
And keeps *anonymous—on his Printer's pledge!*

——————"Amphora cœpit"
"Institui—currente rotâ, *cur urceus exit*"?!
HORACE.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

By J. C.

OMITTED BY THE PRINTER IN THE ORIGINAL MS.

To be inserted between the 6th and 7th lines of the Poem on "SELF."

This seems a Paradox to some,
But let them take the subject *Home*,
And ask themselves,—in simple *Truth*,—
Whether,—till now,—from early youth,
They've never felt a ling'ring *doubt*,
In any scheme they've thought about,
Of certain contemplated deeds,
That raised the question—"Whence proceeds
"The *motive* for this act of mine;
"Is it *un-Selfish*,—Pure,—Divine,—
"Or—am I guided on my way,
"By *something* that I *dare not say!*"

"SELF."

"Γνωθι Σεαυτόν,"—Solon

If one of Athens' seven Sages
Could pen the precept here above,
That stands the test of after ages,
What more is wanted? what to prove—
That man above—the beast below—
Has nothing but bare "*self*" to show!!

"Verum illud est, vulgo, quod dici solet"
"Omnes sibi malle meliùs quam alteri."

Terence.

How much mistaken,—much abused,—
Is that *one word* so often used!
Do *all* that use it clearly see
That word involved in mystery?!
'Tis sad to think, that all we do,
Has "self" and "*self*" *alone* in view!
Let us dissect—and let us find—
The hidden secrets there combined;

And then (sad thought!) the world at large,
Is not acquitted of the charge!
The Priest,—the Statesman,—Christian,—Poet,—
(Whate'er the pain to let them know it)
Are all alike involved in "self,"
Some for ambition—some for pelf!
I would,—for human nature's sake,—
That it were otherwise! But take
The *Priest*—is *he* so full at *ease?*
(Or call it by what name you please)
Is *he* so pure—*unselfish*—good—
That, if he wins one soul to God—
Is *he* so free from *self*ish views,
As——? No matter!—Why the 'Priest' abuse?!
The very soul he saves from death,
(Or fancies) at its latest breath,
Has *he* no *self*ish pleasure *there?*
Or, are his motives pure as air?!
Again,—when deck'd in priestly trim,—
Giving the bread—the wine—in him
View the "*self*"—comfort—honest zeal—
With which he hopes from death to steal

One soul to life! Has *he* no joy—
In pure *disinterest* no alloy?!

The *Statesman*, next in order, see!
Is *he* from *selfishness* so free,
As not to dream of £ *s. d.*?!
But granted, that his stores of gold
Are overflowing,—wealth untold,—
And that his country's weal alone,
Impelled him to support the Throne!
Give him his fullest meed, and say—
"Crown him with laurel,—ivy,—bay"!
But ask him,—in his inmost soul,—
Has not *ambition* some control
O'er all his efforts to transcend
His Peers—Competitors—his *Friend*?
What is ambition but a test
Of all—in life,—his soul loves best?!
He gains the summit of the tree,
And cries, triumphantly, "*Look* at *me*"!!

He dreams of marble—breathless stone—
To *tell* posterity how *he* shone!
Is there no *self* in all his aim?
'A man's a man'—we're all the same!

The *Christian* comes the next in view.
What can I have to say to *you?!*
How little wot ye, that thy creed,
Is *utter selfishness* indeed!
You start! No wonder! But attend!
What is thine *object?* What *thine end?*
Is it not "*self*"—and "*self*" *alone*—
Impels thee to the Mercy throne,?
To plead for pardon for thy sin,
In outward acts,—and thoughts within,—
That, at thy last—thy latest—breath,
Thy soul be saved eternal death?!
Your *very Charities* imply
A love of "*self*!" You ask me "why"?
The kindest act that man can do
Points number ONE, THEN number TWO!

I know the sweetest, dearest face:
Her sphere of goodness, I. ——n place.
She gives her time,—her health,—her store
To ground the brats in worldly lore:
And then,—like Dorcas,—as of old,—
She makes them "coats" to check the cold!
The *body* warmed,—she tends the *soul*,
And points her finger to the goal,
Where all their sorrows—all their grief—
Is sure to find a blest relief!
She clothes—and feeds—the parent,—child—
Imparts her gifts with accents mild,—
Sheds lustre round the path she treads,
And comfort o'er their squalid beds!
In all her kindness—all her zeal—
Is *she* not *selfish?* does she feel
No gentle sense—no sweet delight—
In all her efforts to do right?

I would, I could, the *Poet* spare!
But see! what *selfishness* is *there!*

I pen these lines—and what their end?
To *please myself*—and *pain* my *friend!*
The friend I love—of all the rest—
The purest—kindest—dearest—best—
And *yet*, I say—on *selfish* laws,
She acts—and feels a "self"-applause!
Grant that a Poet may be pure,
Writes not for lucre—can endure
The world's cold contumely—but mind!
He wants to leave a *name behind!*
(All very pleasant to the *Dead?*
But will it give the *living bread?*)!
Still it is "SELF"—and "*self*" it is
That guides him to his fancied bliss!
The *Poet* still shall be my theme,
Howe'er *un*selfish as to *fame!*
My "theme" my*self*—what's that to *me*.
So long as I can truthful be?
I lash my-"*self*"—I lash my *friend*,
To shew that "*self*" is all our end!
How seldom do we learn the *truth*
In ripened age—or early youth?

Be mine the task—tho' small the pleasure—
To shew the world its "form and pressure."!
The *Poet!*—we must cut him short!
He can't appear in "open court!"
Who then? because 'twould take a *ream*,
To tell my readers all I dream,——!

I'll take the *Surgeon* and *Physician*,
(I've written down the Politician),
And shew them that 'twere hard to see,
Which of the two had mastery!
In fair *precedence* comes the *second*,
The "*Head of his profession*" reckoned,
But, after all—pray, why not club
The two—whom all "*the Doctor*" dub?
They work together—hand in hand—
The *first* obeys his lord's command;
What matter if the patient dies?
"He died!—he *would*—'tis no surprise!"
"Think of the trouble we have had!"
"And now he leaves us! 'Tis TOO bad!"

Then comes the trip to *Kensal Green!*
(*No bad investment there*—I ween)
Were ever two such martyrs seen?!
With hat-band—scarf—and eke the gloves,—
The sable train, in sadness, moves.
The conversation thus begins—
"Doubtless the parson shrived the sins"
"Of our most dear, departed friend."
"But what is that to us?—his end"
"Was fast approaching—but yet if"
"You had not made that draught so *stiff*,"
"I do believe it to be true,"
"*I might have had a fee or two!*"
The second *loquitur*—to ask,
"Why moot this point? a bootless task!"
"Besides, I entertain the notion,"
"That *you* administered *a strong potion!*"
"But *neither* could *intend to kill!*"
"*Have you, by accident, seen the* WILL?"
And thus, in converse,—time to cheat,—
They place him in his last retreat!
And *then*—oh! then—from that same hour,
His mem'ry dwindled like a flower!

But, after all, these men of pills,
That tend the sick, to cure their ills,
Are guided by the "*self*"-same power,
That rules us *all* at every hour!

The *Lawyers* next must show their face,
(" *Precedence*" warns me—*out of place*),
But what of that? when now they find
I have not left them *quite* behind!?
Tell me, Sir Pundit, are you sure,
That all *your* acts (*unselfish*, pure)
Are such as could well stand the "*trial*,"
Of honesty, and *self*-denial?!
A suit in court—a legal fight—
(No matter which is wrong or right,)
You, haply, may defend a thief,
Or hold, from "Strachan and Paul," a brief!
You do your best,—exert your art,—
To make "the worse the better part!
Say—what but "*self*" that makes you try
To do *the world* an injury?!

The judge sums up—your client hangs—
You cannot keep him from the fangs
Of outraged justice; but suppose
He 'scapes the rope,—who fancies those
Who rescued him, a whit more free
From utter *selfishness* than he
Who risked his neck, to gain his end,
By basely ruining his friend?!
In either case you work for "*self*,"
If not ambitiously—for pelf!
How sad to think that all we do,
Has but "Σεαυτὸν" (self) in view!

There 's not a soul that e'er had birth,—
There 's not a brute upon the earth,—
That did not—does not—feel, the force
Of "*self*" in all their live-long course!
No! no! depend upon it—all
That breathe, are servants to the call
Of "*self*," in every grade of life!
The lover—mistress—husband—wife!

I love my wife—I love my child,—
But do not fancy me beguiled
Into the false, complacent notion,
But that it comes from "*self*"-emotion!
Still, let me not mistaken be,
Or question my "Philanthropy."
Between "*self*"-LOVE, there *is* a line,
And *selfishness*, however fine—
This comes from Satan—*that Divine!*
'Twould take a Locke—who wrote so well
On human mysteries—to tell
The very "line" where they begin,
This is a *virtue*, *that* a *sin*!
'Twould take a better pen than mine,
The broad distinction to define,
For "broad" the "line" that thus divides,
Where sin, or virtue, there resides!
Had I but Byron's graphic fire,
Or any other *Poet's* lyre,
I could a tale of truth unfold,
In verse—not prose—that ne'er was told!
Yes! my "besetting *sin*" is '*verse*,'
Which, if not classical, is *terse*!

(*Self*-compliment I scarce may rest on,
The critic, then, may "raise the question.")
And something *shorter* said than those,
Who write *prosaically* in prose!
I 'm not acquainted with "*the Nine*,"
("*The Tuneful*") sprung from source Divine,
Nor tasted of Castalia's tide,
Where Music—Poesy—reside!
So read these lines, as they are meant,
To show created nature's bent;
And do not carp at every fault,
Wherein the Poet seems to halt,
But "read—mark—learn," its obvious text—
I 'll take more trouble with my next!—
And, haply, may say *something more*,
Mankind has *seldom* heard before!

THE

"FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES."

"Homo sum,—Humani nihil á me alienum puto."—*Terence.*

Grant me, ye Gods, the graphic power to show,
The "Force of Circumstances" here below!
Teach me to wield this unaccustomed pen,
To show the world it's "pressure,"—and that men
Are guided *more* to each "besetting sin,"
By *outward* "circumstance" than vice within!
Here is a sphere for moralists– not me,—
To show my fellow-sinners the degree,
Of guilt involved in every act and deed;
"*These* are from *virtue*—*those* from *vice* proceed!"
Doubtless the Scriptures tell us—in plain terms,—
That "man is prone to evil" that the germs
Of damning sin, in every heart reside,
Lust, and detraction—rapine—murder—pride!

All these are *dormant* in the human breast,
'Twould take a catalogue to tell the rest!
But while we, thus, acknowledge the defects,
Of human nature in sin's dire effects,—
Oh! let us not—like misanthropes—*decry*,
The teeming *virtues* that in manhood lie!
And yet—these sins and "virtues" are the growth,
Of opportunity—"*circumstances*"—both!
You *doubt* this truth!? Then, take a spade in hand,
Dig fathoms deep—and now throw up the sand,
Guard well the soil—(with glass, or what you
please)
And then expose it to the vernal breeze!
See the vile weeds that rankle in the sun!
Which—*but* for YOU—they never might have done!
Is it so strange,—with *this* bare *fact* in view—
That human nature should be pregnant too,
With every germ of wickedness and sin?!
Let *them lie 'dormant'—they would die within!*
But, brought to light, by some mysterious cause,
They sprout and flourish—obedient to the laws
Of nature—whose, unbending—stern,—behest—
By man, nor beast, can ever be suppress!

Let those that doubt *this* self-convincing truth,
Recal the mem'ries of their early youth,
Which—if not treacherous—can hardly lack
To bring some sad recollections back,
Of follies—vices—sins—or what you will—
Which,—*left untempted*,—might be 'dormant' still!
The greatest sinners that were ever born—
The highest virtues that mankind adorn—
Are, all alike, the puppets of the law—
A '*fate*'—that guides—disposes—*and* '*Foresaw*'—
The various acts—for censure, or for praise,—
Which man commits in all his devious ways!

A theft—manslaughter—or an act of strife,
Involves the culprit, for his term of life,
In penal servitude—a living death!
He pines—invokes—implores—his dying breath!
Trace the poor sinner from his cradle—where
The 'force of circumstance' first wove the snare!
From step to step—(his parents, haply dead,
And *he* left, helpless, on an orphan bed!)

Thrown on the world, he creeps his downward
course,
From vice to vice—a stranger to remorse!
His vile associates—and his dastard train—
Cheer him on acts—of which they share the gain;
Too craven, they, to risk their precious self,
Avoid the danger—but partake the pelf!
In *nature*—noble—*disposition*—*kind*,—
He leaves these '*dormant*' attributes behind!
Now past the Rubicon!—he hides his face,
And wages battle on the human race!
'Till doomed, at length, by destiny to fall,
He dies!—a FELON—the reproach of all!

Change we the scene!—and let us view the child,—
(By 'Force of circumstance,' with guilt defiled)
View the same 'child'—with fond endearment
prest—
Reclining softly 'pon his mother's breast,
His father,—doating on his "darling boy,"—
Shelters and saves him—from the world's alloy!

He grows to manhood—from temptation free,—
And shows—in manhood—what a man should
be!
Contrast the two! The *one*—by fate decreed—
To fall—and suffer, for some damning deed,
Evoked—by 'force of circumstance'—to sin,
Despite the *virtues* that *lay hid within!*
The other lapped—in comfortable ease—
Free from temptation—mounts, by slow degrees—
To honor—competence—distinction—power—
Until—at length—at death's relentless hour,—
He yields his breath—obedient to the call—
And dies regretted—as beloved—by all!
'Contrast the two!'—let "circumstance" appear!
Does '*force* of *circumstance*' not riot *here?!*
Are *both alike* responsible to HIM!
The pliant puppets of their *fortune's whim?!*
Nor Locke—nor Abercrombie*—could define—
"This is THY *guilt*—and *this*—of *virtue*—THINE!"
Let those that rest on soft and balmy down,
Cast not on sin, that harsh—condemning frown,

* Abercrombie "On the Moral Feelings."

Which—but for 'force of circumstance' might lead
That self-same 'frown' upon the *frowner's head!*
Who was it wrote that "Vice—of hideous mien,"
"Which to be hated—needs but to be seen?"
"But seen too oft—familiar with her face"
"We first endure—then pity—then embrace"!?
He *might* have asked—with equal--earnest--truth--
"*Where* the *spectator*, in his *early youth!?*"
Was it not "force of circumstance" that shed
Its baleful influence o'er the *Seer's head?*
And led him on,—from infancy to man,—
The vicious victim of some hidden plan,
That scattered round his path the luring bait,
To tempt—and drag—him to his downward fate?!

Hail, gentle charity!—how rare we find,
Thy saint-like virtues in the human mind!
Too prone the mass to judge their fellow-men,
By the false standard of the world—and then,
Consign the wretched victim of a *Cause,*
To the stern vengeance of his country's laws!

What reck "the mass" to ascertain the truth,
How 'force of circumstance' beset his youth?
And quenched his 'moral feelings' in the "slough
Of deep "despond" to sink—he *knew* not *how!?*

Take, next, the scions of a noble tree—
Cradled in down—and lapped in luxury!—
The first-born claims his old ancestral halls—
Regardless—careless—of his brothers' calls:—
His noble father gathered to "the Tomb"
"Of all the Capulets,"—and yet for whom,
He cares much less than e'en the meanest serf,
Whose fathers moulder under yonder turf!
Cast on the world! these sons of high degree,—
Impelled—per "force"—to seek their destiny!—
With the small pittance, that a mother's care
Endows her "boys," to keep them from despair!
But just enough to save them from the need
Of abject poverty!—How bitter to proceed,
To the sad sequel of their destined fate!
Betrayed—abandoned—penitent—*too late*—

'Too late'—to save their station in the world,
From which—by 'force of circumstances'—hurled,
Their very blood now curdles in their veins!
Too proud—for aid—to tax their brother's gains,
Which primogeniture, by law decreed,
To be *his* riches—and—his *brothers' need!*
Here is the point at which the Poet halts,
To guage the moral turpitude of faults,
Of those *compelled*, by '*circumstance*,' to tread
The path that leads them to a pauper's bed!
Beset with poverty! Patrician blood!
Stagnates in contact with a meaner flood!
Now draw the veil! The Poet stands aghast!
How paint these wretched victims at the last?!
Oh! let not Moralists stand coldly by,
And taunt the Poet with a SEEMING LIE
The *very facts* narrated—are the *truth*—
He *knew them well*, in *their*—the *writer's*—*youth!*
Two nobler scions of a nobler stock
Were never born!—Unequal to the shock
Of adverse 'circumstance'—they downward fell,
And vanished from the sphere they graced so well!

Some rigid Puritan might haply say—
" *Who was to blame* for all this sad display"
" Of talents wasted—of *such* reckless course"
" The certain harbingers of a vain remorse ?!"
Just let that self-complacent saint be placed,
(Where all his movements could be fairly traced)
Place him where those *sad* " *two*" were placed before,
Would *he* not act the same as they of yore ?!
" Odi profanum vulgus !" old Horace said—
How many centuries has *he* been dead ?!
And now—one thousand—eight, and—fifty-six—
Are *we* still guided by the priestly tricks,
That whilom ruled the world—and even now,—
Place man in thraldom—but he knows not how !
Well ! let that pass ! The Priest may blame the writer,
The Poet,—still,—may be the harder ' biter'!
And show the Priest that Priestcraft is a trade,
For which—perchance—the *man* was *never made !*
Or ' made' by ' force of circumstance' to fill
A place—*whose duties he performed so ill !*

A well-known noble—and of good report,—
Has many sons, who claim their sire's support—
He "cuts and carves" their 'destinies' in life—
For John—the forum—Charles—a wealthy wife—
Robert—a soldier—lives at home, in ease,
The next—a sailor—navigates the seas—
Now *George* remains—a lad of doubtful thrift!
(There's a fat living in his father's gift!)
He goes to college—has a private "*coach*"—
Keeps his set 'terms'—but *not without reproach!*—
Until by dint of more, or less, "reproaching"—
Some *college* FAVORS—and some private 'coaching,'—
He blooms at length—(the 'parson' lately dead)—
With Parish honors on his "*Reverend*" head!!
Is it not *thus* that wolves '*protect*' the sheep?!
And *scatter* folds that they were sworn to keep?!
Is it not '*thus*' that "circumstance" attends,
To drag her victims to her specious ends?!
Where is the man—the woman—or the child—
Whom "force of circumstance" has not beguiled.

Into some course that led their after-life
To blessings—honors—or—to sin and strife?!
What solid 'comfort' would mankind possess—
How would the 'many sons' the father bless—
If left unfettered in their nature's bent—
And not—by "force of circumstances" sent,
To tread the path their "nature" never meant!

Let us discuss *another* case—wherein,
The "force of circumstance" first led to sin!—
A young and lovely girl is sent to *school*—
To learn "*accomplishments*" and—*play the fool!!*
German—Italian—French—and every art,—
In which the *woman* has to "play her part!"
Oh! 'tis not *thus* that *daughters* can be led—
In virgin pureness, to the marriage bed!
Let those that make a trade of female lore,
Confess—with shame—the *facts* they knew before!
How *one* was tempted o'er the garden wall—
Into those arms that *made*—NOT SAVED—her *fall!*

How *others* stole—in silent—dead of night—
Despite the trembling of their girlish fright—
To talk *on subjects* that were "*not allowed*"
But boldly canvassed in the school-room crowd!
Has not the Poet felt—in inmost soul—
The *bitter sequence!—now beyond control?!*
Send BOYS to *school!*—for classics—manly pride—
But GIRLS!!—Oh! *keep them by their mothers' side!!*

A score of pages would not serve to tell,
The sad results that parents know too well!—
The prurient feelings of the purest maid,
Are *willing victims* to that fruitful trade,
Which fosters *elements* that lie within,—
To sprout, and germinate, in *active sin!*
"*Young Ladies'* SEMINARIES"!—(an *awkward word!*)
But say—*the best* of which *one ever heard!*—
Religion—morals—all that would *appear*,
To fit the pupils for their after sphere!—
The lady—Principal—of blameless life,—
Has had some troubles in her worldly strife.

That fit her "*eminently*" for charge of those
Whose parents *fancy* they may well repose
Their simple confidence!—in care of whom,
She *holds the guidance* of *their after-doom!!*
What is a "*seminary*"—but a field to grow,
The *seeds* that *innocence should never know?!*
Not EVEN WHEN she enters into life,
To charm her husband, as his wedded *wife!*—
"Domus et placens uxor"! How many a man,
And woman too—now lives to rue the plan
Of sending *daughters* from their 'mothers' side,'—
To foster "*dormant*" wickedness and pride,
Into *that worst* of *hotbeds*—which *pretends,*
To lead its pupils but to *virtues ends!!*
Can "force of circumstance" much further go?!
When all these *facts* unquestionably show
The sad results attendant upon those,
Who trace their after-miseries and woes,
To *that mistaken*—(*haply well-meant*)—*scheme!*
The victims *waken*—from a ghastly *dream*—
To find, too late, that all their after course,
Is hopeless wretchedness!—a vain remorse!!

The lowest grade that woman e'er attained,—
The worst pre-eminence she ever gained—
And every female element effaced—
May still to 'force of circumstance' be traced!
The wretched creature that infests the streets,
Should draw *compassion* from all those she meets!—
If,—on that countenance,—you clearly trace
The beauties, sin, nor sorrow, could efface,
Oh! pass not by, with that contemptuous sneer,
But pause and meditate!—*then—shed a tear!*
Yes! drop a 'tear' that all her prospects fell,
Before that Monster whom she "loved too well,"
Who lured, and tempted, her to be his Bride,
With arts, that false sincerity can hide;!
Then—warmed by passion—in an evil hour—
She bent before it—and he pluck'd the flower!
The flower pluck'd—*he threw the stem away*—
To rot, and fester, in its own decay!
Is *this* not "force of circumstance" that shed
Such wretched misery o'er her *hapless* bed?!—
The sequel needs not Poetry to paint
The lot of one that *might* have been a saint

But for the fate that led her to depend,
On him who ruined her—to gain his end!
Still must the Poet painfully pourtray—
The downward steps of her thus led astray!
Bereft of what was once her honest pride,—
She glided slowly down the venom'd tide,
That washed all Virtue's feelings from her mind,
And left her naught but recklessness behind!
Here must we stop!—and veil the squalid room
In which—too surely—she must meet her doom!
Bowed down by sickness—poverty—remorse—
She lies—at length—a scorned—neglected corse!

The man that boldly meets the coming strife,
And claims, at once, "*Your money or your life*,"
Is *perfect innocence* compared with him,
Who stabs his victim for a carnal whim,
And then *abandons*, to her hopeless ruin,
The helpless creature of his own undoing!!

Still must I drag the Reader to my theme!
And ask—"Is '*force of circumstance*' a dream"?!
What—but *that element* could thus displace
The charms of innocence from that beauteous face,
And print the stamp of wretchedness and woe,
Which—but for *him*—might never have been so?!

'Tis well for those who float a-down the stream—
Who look on life, as but a pleasant dream,—
And whom Temptation never yet assailed,—
To tread the path in which our victim failed!
'Tis well for *them*, to turn their scornful eyes,
And close their senses to the wretch's cries!—
Unlike the "Good Samaritan" of yore,—
Make light of burdens that they never bore!
Woman, alas!—is woman's direst foe!
Let *her* but *fail!*—'tis *there* she feels the blow!
But why should *this* be?—when 'tis woman's
pride,
To range her energies upon woman's side!

Yet—let but *once*—an "erring sister" stray—
Whom "force of circumstance" has led away—
Mark the contempt—the dark-averted eye,—
With which—too scornfully—they pass her by!
And close all avenues to that only door,
On which is written—"*Go, and sin no more!*"
Still—to pursue my deep—unfathomed—theme,
That hovers o'er the senses, like a dream!
A 'theme'—not wisely—chosen, as my text—
That rules this nether being—and the next!!
That casts its influence on all we see—
Directing all,—in great—or small degree,—
Imparting riches—honors—all that tends,
To *that* on which our happiness depends!—
While others, forced by 'circumstance'—to drink
The bitter cup of sorrow to the brink!
In spite of all their efforts to keep free,
From rocks and quicksands—in this stormy sea,—
They find their bark—still drifting on the shoal,—
Spurning the rudder's weak and vain control!
'Till dashed—at length—on Scylla's dreaded shore,
They suffer shipwreck—and are seen no more!

But should they fail to touch that fearful Rock—
Escaping, scarcely, from the horrid shock—
Behold *Charybdis!*—on the other side!
Engulphing all who venture on her tide!!

What need of tropes and figures, as a proof,
That those who wish for peace, must stand aloof
From every art—from all temptation—free—
If "force of circumstance" would let it be!?
Need it be said that 'Scylla' gives the trope,
Of all,—in life,— that is beyond a hope?
That Rock, on which, full many a victim dies,
In hope of gaining a long wished-for prize!
And then—'Charybdis'! is it hard to find,
The vortex where all 'hope' is left behind—?
The whirlpool—where—all moral feeling past—
The wretched victim is engulphed at last!
Drawn in by that resistless love of all,
On which our frailties are so prone to fall!
That *Centripetal power*, whence few can 'hope'
Escape, when, once, betrayed within its scope'!

A sheet of white—unsullied—paper gives
The fittest type where virgin pureness lives—
And if—perchance—a drop of ink should fall—
Upon that—yet untarnished—surface—all
That man can do—to veil the seeming blot,
Himself had caused—then let him share her lot,
And *write his name* on where he dropt the stain,
The tarnished paper is restored again !
Or—if some *pure*—but *rigid*—passer by,
Should close her eyes—and heave a sneering sigh,
Let *her* beware—when next those two may meet—
She may not pass *her* in the public street !

The Poet's pen might flow as long as ink
Was found—and *he* had common sense to think !
But why prolong a subject on a theme,
Which—but for reality—might be a dream ! ?
A 'dream' that age—nor middle age—nor youth—
But must acknowledge it to be the truth !

Let not the Critic bear too hard on him,
Who writes for pleasure—or a fancy whim—
He *may*—perchance—*unwittingly*—give pain,
But shrinks from looking to his pen for gain!
Could he but write, in prose—as well as verse,—
(Critics may well deny that *these* are *terse*)
How many pages could the writer trace,
In proof of all his Thesis would embrace,
That each,—and every—grade, on earth, relies
On all that "force of circumstance" supplies!

Let not the Reader cast these lines aside,
As fancied offsprings of poetic pride!
But let him read,—and *think*,—the subject o'er,
The Poet asks for—and can claim—no more!

THOUGHTS

Suggested to the Writer on his endeavouring to reconcile some Texts of Scripture with others.

See the Preface.

"Non cuivis homin contingit adire Corinthum."—HORACE.

THIS world of trial!—this heritage of woe!
Why was it made?—why constituted so?
I never *asked* my being—never for my birth—
Why then encumber me with wretched earth?
Was it that God his vengeance wished to wreak
On babes and sucklings, ere they learned to speak?
"*Predestined*" they, this bitter course to run—
To *live*—to *suffer*—and to be *undone!*
Far be the thought!! *Religion* has her sway!—
And teaches man "unceasingly to pray!"
To "*pray*" for *what?* for something freely *given?*
For manna scattered by the hand of Heaven?
Look to the Bible! Churchmen! tell the *Truth!*
Was *I* not *Blest*—or "*Fated*" from my *youth!?*

From countless ages, hid from mortal ken—
Was not *my* destiny determined *then?!*
"*Foreknowledge*" here—"*Predestination*" *there!*
Was Human *Reason* given as a snare?!
Why to be told the "narrow path" to tread?—
The Scriptures say that "all who run may read,"
And *yet*—in characters unfurled to sight,—
The wretch "*Predestined*" never can go right!
Say!—Is there anything that *I* can do,
To change my *Fate* and make *that Book* untrue?!
Who that has lived could alter its behest?
He writhed, and suffered—and is *Curst* or *Blest!*—
Such the Decree—and such the 'scapeless lot—
Of all that live, and—dying—are forgot!!
The *Passions*—planted in the Human breast—
Find shelter there—but *not at our request!*
The madman—moping in his wretched cell—
Is *he* foredoomed to taste the curse of Hell?!
Why should the man, with strong commanding
sense,
His brother meet with scarce a competence?!
Why should the *one* be "*elected*" from on High,
The *other* doomed—self-helplessly—to die?

Are all alike responsible to God--
The man of genius--and the senseless clod?
Is *this* the way those attributes to prove,
Of *justice—mercy—never-failing love?*
Let Sophists teach—let Casuists declaim—
Look to *the text!—infallibly the same!*
These are sad truths—unfit for us to scan—
Who shall instruct us in the Omniscient plan?
"The *Bible*," says the priest—"search well through *that*,"
Have *I* not "searched" it—and discovered—*what?*!
Just this—in spite of all that man can try—
His *Doom* is fixed from all Eternity!
Where can we turn to find some solid ground
On which to rest?—in vain we look around!
Deluded man!—let this conviction be—
Our "*Doom*" depends not upon *you* nor *me!*

Judas Iscariot—who betrayed the Christ,
Had *he* the power to thwart the plan devised?!
Had *he* the power to change the mighty "Plan,"
Fixed—from Eternity—to govern Man?!

What then can "Sophists"—what can "Casuists"
say,
But that his *breath was given to betray?!*
Strive as he *would*—and let him do his *best*—
He *must* be *Cursed*—he *never could be Blest!!*
All that we know of Judas—is to tell
That he "repented him"—and that Hell
Had more attractions for him than remorse—
So "went and hanged himself!". . . . . .
Think not, my Reader, that I thus impugn
The Great Creator of the Sun and Moon—
This glorious orb—the Firmament of Stars—
The God of *Peace!*—yet *ehe* the God of WARS!
The "*God of Battles*"—in which myriads bled,
In deeper dye, than ever since was shed!
From pregnant women! from the suckling child!
Survivors cursing—with a madness wild,
The 'scapeless Edict issued from on High
That doomed their helpless innocents to die!!
What right the "clay" the "potter" to upbraid—
That from his plastic substance should be made,
One "vessel" *here*, consigned to hopeless wrath.
Its *brother*, *there*—saved from *eternal* death?!

Is it that "Faith" and "Works" are so combined,
As to leave *nothing* for the *Human Mind?!*
"*Faith, without Works,*" is nothing we are taught,
Works, without Faith,—the Scriptures tell us—
"*naught.*"
Look then around! examine well your heart—
This is the "*Gift*" from which *you cannot part!*
Your kind affection—purest, holiest, deed—
Is *not your own!* yet—you receive the meed
Of *praise* from *Man*—however justly given—
For Virtues lavished by the hand of Heaven!—
Your prayers—your vigils—"every perfect gift,
Doth come from God!" Say—that, of *that* bereft,
Would you, or COULD you, tread the "Narrow
Path"
That leads to Bliss?—'scaping Eternal wrath,
Reserved for *him* who fain would save his soul,
But for that "Edict" that *defies control?!*
'Tis folly—*worse*—'tis *madness* to suppose,
That "*works*" *alone*, can lead us to repose!
Wanting that element which "*Faith*" supplies,
To raise those "*works*" triumphant to the skies!

The Scriptures tell us ask for *that* in "*Prayer*"—
The *Power* to "*ask*" *it*—is it *here* or *there*?!
Have *I* that "*Power*"—have *I* that sacred boon?
THAT must be tested either *late* or *soon*!
Till then, I travel over life's dull round,
And *wonder where*—HOW—happiness is found!
I do my best—I do what many do—
And yet I *think*—and *fear*—and *doubt*—that I am *true*!
But *why* should thus, be sacred writ so *strained*,
As to leave *doubts* upon the "Plan ordained?"!
How can we "*Run and Read*" when many a *text*,
Throws such dark shadows o'er the soul perplext?!
The simple Indian entertains no "doubt"
But that the "*Great Spirit*" is within—without—
Watching, at every turn, his devious way,
To point the "*Trail*" and check him when astray!
Look to the *Christian*! racked with *many* a "doubt,"
Raises this question—"am I *in* or *out*?"!
Admitted *fully*, that (*these* "*texts*" *apart*)
The Blessed Scriptures comfort every heart—

Smooth the sick couch—disarm the demon Death—
Give hope to sinners at their latest breath!
Here must I stop! and check that honest zeal,
That fain would give utterance to what I feel!
Leaving to Churchmen *fairly* to display,
And *reconcile*, these "TEXTS" as *best they may!*

Now must the Poet plead his own defence,
For writing what—to some—will give offence,
To many *Churchmen*, it may *wormwood* be!
While, haply, *Calvinists* may think with *me!*
But let not, either one, or other, blame
The 'Spectre Bard,' who writes without a name,
Simply to register his own conviction;
That the TRANSLATIONS are—a CONTRADICTION!
How gladly would the writer hail the day,
When all these difficulties were done away!
And that the plain—and honest—simple *Word*
In Christian Churches, were as *simply heard!*

LINES

Written (on request) after the Author had read "Sherlock on Death."

When first Jehovah, from his blest abode,
On perfect man, the breath of life bestowed,
The nascent offspring of his Maker's love,
On earth partook the blessings of above,
'Twas there—for reasons, still from us concealed—
Nor, till the end of time, can be revealed—
"'Twas then'—we learn—*permitted*—or *decreed*—
(No subtle casuist—I narrate the deed)
That Man—Apostate—proud—rebellious—Man,
Should fall—by Sin—from God's angelic Plan!

Mercy refused—lo!—Justice takes her place!
The King of Terrors claims the Human race!

Claims and receives—obedient to the call,
Relentless Death becomes the lot of all!
Yet--not abandoned in this lost estate,
By scheme—how deep—how wonderful—how great,
The offended Monarch of the realms above,
Repays man's base ingratitude by Love!
And sends—in Peace—his sole-begotten Son, –
To be the Saviour of a world undone!
The Sacred Volume, eke in Mercy given,
Pourtrays the Blest realities of Heaven,
Grace follows grace—fresh mercies still appear,
And *mortal agents* make the truth more clear!
In this great work—see *Sherlock* take his stand,
In calm obedience to divine command,
The proud subduing—giving strength to weak—
Eyes to the blind—and courage to the meek—
Hope to the Christian at his latest breath—
A staff—and comfort—in the vale of Death!
Read him—ye wise!—from *Sherlock* learn to know,
How fleeting—frail—is happiness below!

Unstayed by Virtue—unimproved by Grace,
To speed thee forward on thy Heavenly race!
Learn him ye blind—let *Sherlock* ope thine eyes,
To view the splendid glories of the skies,
Let all peruse him—all who prize their soul,
And pant—impatient—for the wish'd-for goal!

Written (impromptu) on the Fly-Leaf of a young Lady's Prize Book.

If prizes, such as *this*, bestowed,
On education's bright success,
Can tend to give a sharper goad,
To learning and to happiness,

Go on—proceed—strain every nerve,
Thy little book-case soon shall groan,
And every future prize shall serve,
To make succeeding ones thine own!

And when that anxious hour shall come,
In which thy lot—by Fate decreed—
Is cast—the man that seeks his doom
In thee—shall find a PRIZE *indeed!*

LINES

(Impromptu) on being asked by a young Lady to write some verses "on Death."

———

As Sysiphus, erst, by the gods was decreed,
On a summit, to drag a huge rock of the plain,
When, by dint of much toiling, he hoped to succeed,
But discovered alas! that his labor was vain!
Just *such* is the labor imposed, when you ask
Me to write you some lines on the subject of *Death!*
The blessings of *life* were an easier task,—
On love—beauty—fame—alas! fame's but a breath!

But how can the cases be parallel?—thus—
I labor and toil to fulfil the decree,
And proceed, in the fruitless attempt to discuss
The delights of the blest—from corruption set free!
Like Æolus' offspring—success is denied!
'Tis in vain that—in fancy—bright visions I see,
I stop!—become giddy—and turning aside—
All my senses fall back to the world—and to Thee!

MONODY

On the Death of a very favorite Dog.

BY HIS MISTRESS.

My darling "Prince!" and art thou dead!?
And is thy life thus quickly sped?
How many years have you and I,
Each other loved in sympathy!?
'Tis nigh two lustres—something short—
Since first thy young—endearing—sport
Amused me - lacking many joys,
To which they were some counterpoise!
Since then—of all thy winning traits—
These lines can only dim the praise;
I would, I could, thy life extend
To where this life of mine shall end!

But now—oh! now—that thou art gone.
And I—in sadness—left alone,
How many retrospective ties
Bring sorrow to these tearful eyes!
But this is vain!—why should I weep?
Thy course is run—now calmly sleep.
In full assurance that thy place
Is closed against thy faithful race!

LINES

*(Written impromptu) on being asked by Laura to write "*SOMETHING*" in her 'Album.'*

Yes! Laura! I'll write—if it be but a line,—
And convert this blank page to a mirror of truth,
In which all thy virtues shall faithfully shine,
What though tarnished by some few slight failings of youth;
To begin then—you're passably fair—let us say—
That you've stores of good humour—of laughter—and joy—
May your heart's best affections—I earnestly pray—
For ever be sheltered from worldly alloy!

Aye! "worldly alloy"!—that Charybdis of life,
That vortex that swallows our charities up—
'Tis the withering blast—'tis the source of all strife,
'Tis the curse—'tis the drug—that embitters your cup!
Abandon it Laura! let reason have sway,
Let religion in all its benignity reign,
*Once more—to your Maker in fervency pray,
That the sin of ingratitude cease to be thine!
The force of example—the scoffs of the proud—
Th' allurements of fashion no solace can bring,
When the scene that's before us shall vanish in cloud,
There's one Judge for the peasant, the peer, and the king!

* This expression alludes to an acknowledgment of 'Laura' to the Author that she "*used to say her prayers*—but had *then given it up!*"

An "album's" a vain—foolish—*venomous* thing—
Ladies *sometimes* find out that it carries a *sting!*
By thrusting it into each visitor's face,
Until some one more "*rude*" than the rest of his race,
Might write in it, something they'd *wish to efface!*

A PARADOX.

I frequently look on a certain dear face,
Delighted—enchanted—to see
That beautiful countenance—suavity—grace—
With what sweetness *it* beams upon *me*!

I do not believe that the world can contain,
Such an index of all that is dear,
Such tender avoidance of all that can pain,
Let it's object be distant, or near!

And yet—with this deep-felt devotion avowed,
Another name steals on my sense!
Of whose love—but in death—I can cease to be proud,
With a feeling—absorbing—intense!—

This appears a rank paradox! banish the thought,
"Maria"—"Louisa"—they're *one*!—
There's naught of unfaithfulness—fickleness—
naught—
'Tis but ending just where I begun!

TO _____

——

What is it that gives so bewitching a grace,
  Such a secret—intelligent—air,
Such a sunshine of soul, that plays round her dear
    face,
At which art stands abashed, when attempting to
    trace,
  The charms that are resident there?!

'Tis her eye, that with soft sensibility beams,
  With a tear from the fountain of love,
And a look that can mock at philosophers' dreams,
With a radiant smile that no mortal beseems,
  But an angel come down from above!

Yet—it *is* not the mere fascination of eyes,
That imparts such Promethean fire,
Her attraction in pure self-abandonment lies,
While her total unconsciousness sweetens the prize,
And engenders the hallowed desire!

TO THE SAME.

Has no one e'er said it—in song—or in prose,
Of a certain attractive—intelligent grace,
That over thy lineaments calmly repose,
And impart irresistible charms to thy face?!

Has no one remarked an ineffable smile,
That sweetly—tenaciously—clings to the heart,
Of a voice—a demeanour—devoid of all guile?
'Tis from *this*—my sweet child—that I never
can part!

'I never can part' from that soft—beaming eye,
That flashes, anon, with intelligent fire,
That evinces a passion that fain would deny,
Yet betokens—a warm—but a chastened—desire!

Look back to the life she was doomed to embrace,
Look back to the years, coldly—chillingly—spent,—
Is there naught on that countenance, easy to trace,
Of patient endurance—submission—content?!

'Tis well that the world can boast something like this!
That *I* can find "something" to cling to my heart,
That all my sad sorrows now centre in bliss!
Oh! say—my sweet child—that we *never* shall part!

LINES,

Sent with a Bottle of "Parfait Amour" to———, previously to her Marriage.

Accept—dear girl—this little token,
The fondest—richest—I can give.
Oh! guard the fragile gift unbroken,
The longest day you have to live!

The more you drain the precious treasure,
E'en to the dregs—believe the muse!
The more 'twill yield an ample measure,
Exhaustless as the widow's cruse!

If—as you pass life's fitful season—
Friends should e'er ungrateful prove,
What balm can heal the galling treason,
What? but a mutual "Perfect love"?!

How oft, when writhing under sorrow,
Racked by many an anxious care,
Looking sadly to the morrow,
Have I not found my solace there?!

Fail not, then, to guard the fountain,
Whence such genial blessings flow,
Source, from whence, is ever mounting,
Heaven's foretaste here below!

"FAREWELL."

And wilt thou—*must thou* say 'Farewell,"
  Does cruel fate decree to part,
Does stern necessity compel,
  Such woe to this distracted heart?!
Repeat it not! In mercy spare
  Such bitter anguish to my soul,
Can *false deceit* have sojourned where
  I fondly quaffed the nectar'd bowl?!
Far be the thought!—It cannot be!
  Oh! rather tell me that I dwell,
In cherished memory, with thee,
  This heart betrays, I love too well!
Go then beloved! but oh! that sound,—
  —That dreaded sound—"Farewell" forbear!
Say but—oh! spare the bitter wound,
  Say—that we part—to meet again!

LINES

On being asked by a young lady to write something on her Birth-day.

You ask me to write you some lines on a day
That can *never* '*return*'—tell me—what can I say?
Can I say that it *will?*—can I speak it with truth,
That age and disease are not sequels of youth,
That to death you're exempt from the perilous call,
—E'en so young?—soon or late—'tis the lot of us all.
Ah! no!—look around you—look forward, look back—
See the ravages Time leaves behind in his track!
The sins—the remorses—calamities—strife—
And the cares that attend on this turbulent life!
If *this* won't convince you—just look in the glass,
Sketch your portrait,—and keep it—two lustres shall pass,

And then *look again*—how like you the face?
Has the brow not been touched by Time's envious
trace?!
"Rejoice," then, "with trembling," at every
"Return"
Of the day that will bring you still nearer "the
bourn,
"Whence no trav'ller returns"—rather keep it
in fear,
Lest the next—in it's orbit—should fail to
appear,
Still—*wishing* you many a happy long year!

THE "TERRIBLY EARLY MAN."

The proverb is good—it is said,
That "they who'd be wealthy and wise,"
"Should always go early to bed,"
"And never be late when they rise;"

To *others*—the system's distressing,—
For ages, *I've* followed the plan,
With the,—somewhat *equivocal*,—blessing,
"You're a terribly early man"!

I rise with the twilight of morning,—
Which I never neglect if I can,—
When, the cook, and the chambermaid, yawning,
Cry "Oh! what a terrible man"!

I steal out of bed from my wife,
Who is always averse to the plan,
And imploringly cries—"Oh! my life!
"You're a terribly early man"!

CHARADE.

Look to your map—and point your finger where
My FIRST stands prominent in distinction—there,
The Spaniard claims a long and far descent,
That stands in place of mental ornament,!
Assumes a courage, that is not his own,
The type,—and semblance,—of the stingless drone!

What endless changes does my SECOND take!
In form,—in size—in various shape, and make,
Now plain—now intricate—now large—now small,—
And yet—*one little word* reveals it all!
It opens locks—displays what treasure's there,—
What hidden secrets does it not declare!
These very lines would still Enigma be,
But for that 'word' to solve the mystery!

My patient *WHOLE!* it's heritage the whip!
With abject poverty for fellowship,—
Bearing a burden oft too hard to bear,
To find it's recompense in scanty fare!
Then say—what am I?—tell me what's my name,
You can't!—Then *take it— your's* is *just the same!*

CHARADE.

The Roman cohorts—midst the clash of arms,
Rushed on my FIRST—despising war's alarms,
Flushed with unerring victory—my *SECOND*
Can hardly less imperative be reckoned!
It *rants*—it raves—calls sinners to reflect,—
And even bids the good—"Be circumspect,"
Holds out all sorts of punishments to *these*,
To *those* it promises eternity of ease,
Tells of the pitfalls, that encircle youth,
The sure,—and lasting,—benefits of truth!

Beware my WHOLE! look well behind the screen!
Is there no tipstaff stealing on the scene,
Armed with a dreaded instrument of law,
To drag thee, trembling, to the justice-bar?!
Say then—what *am* I? what my mystic WHOLE,
That part affects the body—part—the soul!?

CHARADE.

Search through the world—all nations must admit,
That I—my FIRST—sad ravages commit,
Spoiling their fruits—and—frankly be it known—
I claim—and *take*—a portion as my own!—
Nor can the ocean an exemption claim,
At sea—on shore—I serve them all the same,
Nay more!—on *me*, full many a shipwreck's laid,
Numbering *myself—and others*—with the dead!

My SECOND'S quite a different sort of thing,
It helps to make the trappings of a king,
And peasant too—"There nothing is like leather,"
It serves to bind e'en opposites together!
So spake the cobbler—and so sings the muse,
Why not?—She's thinking of *a pair of shoes!*

My WHOLE in torrid climates has it's bed,
Rankling in dank luxuriance—it is said;—
Transported thence—it graces the saloon—
Supports a titled lady in a swoon.—
The truant—subject to scholastic laws—
Dreads me as much as he would dread the
"*taws*"—
Then what my name? Declare it—or confess
My simple riddle lies beyond your guess!

CHARADE.

O'er the wide plains and mountains of the earth,
My *First*—in chaos, found—in order—birth,
Filling the world with plenty—and anon—
All nature gladdened at the welcome boon.
Change we the scene! My *Second* let us scan,
'Tis woman's weapons in her wars with man,
Parts friends and neighbours—as a wall or dyke—
Of iron—wood—or anything you like.
My *whole's* a bird well known in Britain's clime,
And finds, in modern stair-cases, a rhyme—
Comes in the spring—accompanies the swallow—
And lingers with us when the corn-fields mellow.

CHARADE.

Deep in the bowels of the solid earth,
My FIRST—in darkness—finds it's secret birth,
When brought to light—no crystal shines more
bright,
Glistening, and sparkling—as the starry night!
This point attained—proceed we to my SECOND,
A simple—plain—but useful—process reckoned,
For keeping hands, and feet, from weather,
Just as an unguent preserves *tan'd* leather;
My WHOLE stands chronicled in historic lore,
For matchless virtue—and for *something more!*

CHARADE.

My *First* is the trade to which cobblers aspire,
My *Second's* a literal *unit*,
My *Third* is oft played on the hypocrite's lyre.
When to interest's pitch he can tune it—
With my *Second* and *Third*, it seems strange to relate—
That the cobbler disclaims his profession!
While my *Third* can assume the debasing estate
Of a bow, and a cringing petition—
Yet a very good clue still remains to my *whole*.
As it serves to denote an arch-traitor,
Who, to fill his own coffers, *imperilled his soul*,
By depriving his dupes of their "prater"! *

* Anglice—*Palatoe*

CHARADE.

My *whole* is, too oft, of confusion and noise,
A scene, which—when guessed—you'll allow
And, tho' strange, when beheaded, it mostly employs
It's powers to "kick up a row"!

Beheaded—a soldier now craves for his share,
Which obtained, he oft gets in a scrape,
To my *whole* he's confined—and now left to despair,
For a month not allowed to escape!

Note.—This charade is best adapted, for solution, by one who has been on service in the East Indies, where it was written.

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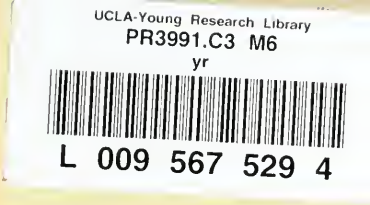

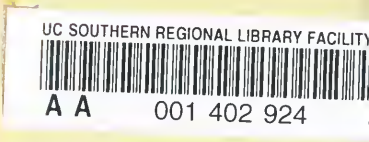

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